

Summary

Proposed Rule Revisions for Educator Preparation and Accountability (REPA)

Why we need to revise current licensing regulations

- Research indicates that *teachers* are the primary influence on students' academic achievement, but our current policies don't ensure that we're putting the best qualified teachers in the classroom. In the coming years, as experienced teachers retire, Indiana faces a critical teacher shortage, especially in vital subjects like math and science.
 - The National Council on Teacher Quality gave Indiana a 'D' for its policies effecting teacher quality. Indiana ranks low in our ability to identify and retain effective teachers as well as our ability to weed out the worst teachers.
 - Of all the new teaching certifications in 2008-09, 7% were Math and 6% were Science certifications.
 - Within 5 years, 25% of mathematics teachers, 25% of science teachers, and 36% of Career and Tech teachers will be eligible to retire. Within 10 years retirement projections are 36%, 36%, and 52% respectively.
- Current regulations waste teachers' time and money, but are not effective in the goal of making them better teachers.
 - Currently, the Indiana Administrative Code contains references to several prior licensing systems that place contrasting and ineffective requirements on license holders.
 - Too many requirements for initial licensure and for license renewal are not connected to student achievement or educators' ability to teach.
 - Existing rules handcuff principals and administrators and limit opportunities to make staffing and professional-development decisions that will improve student achievement.
- Revising our licensing rules will help put Indiana in a top position to receive federal Race to the Top grant money.
 - *"States, for example, that limit alternative routes to certification for teachers and principals, or cap the number of charter schools, will be at a competitive disadvantage. And states that explicitly prohibit linking data on achievement or student growth to principal and teacher evaluations will be ineligible for reform dollars until they change their laws."* -- U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, July 24, 2009

The goals of changes in licensing regulations

- Increase teachers' content knowledge and instructional skill.
- Increase student achievement to meet state goals.
 - 90 percent of students will pass both math and language arts portions of the ISTEP exam.
 - 25 percent of students will pass advanced coursework (such as advanced placement classes) with high scores.
 - 90 percent of students will graduate high school.
- Increase administrators' flexibility to make innovative changes to improve student achievement.
- Clean up the bureaucratic red tape that slows down teacher and administrator efforts to relicense and improve instructional quality.
- Update regulations and remove redundancies and outdated provisions.

Proposed Licensing Changes

- **Content-Knowledge Requirements.** We will revise the licensing requirements to reflect teachers' content knowledge.
 - Elementary teachers (Pre-K to 6) must earn:
 - A baccalaureate degree consisting of an education major with a content-area minor; or
 - A content-area major with an education minor; or
 - Certification by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE).
 - Education major must include no more than 30 credit hours in pedagogy.
 - Education minor must include no more than 15 credit hours.
 - Secondary teachers (5 to 12) must either receive:
 - A baccalaureate degree consisting of any applicable content-area major — as well as a minor in education; or
 - Certification by the ABCTE.
- **Testing for Every Teacher.** All teaching candidates must pass certain tests to demonstrate competence in content-area knowledge and pedagogy (including the PRAXIS II exams). Out-of-state applicants will be required to meeting testing requirements regardless of teaching experience.
 - PRAXIS I tests will no longer be required at the time of licensure. Instead, teaching applicants will be required to demonstrate basic skills before being admitted to schools of education.

- **Better Novice-Teacher Programs.** For new teachers, we're proposing the elimination of burdensome requirements not proven to improve teachers' ability. Portfolio and mentor program requirements will be removed. Eliminating these two requirements will result in significant savings to school districts. Mentor programs will become a local option.
 - As an alternative, we're proposing a new, simplified Beginning Teacher Residency Program, in which a building-level administrator will be responsible for assessing a new teacher's effectiveness and developing a plan for professional improvement.
 - Expand initial practitioner and initial workplace specialist licenses from two years to three years to better monitor and support these new school employees.
- **Streamlined License Renewal for Current Teachers.** Allow in-service credits along with a professional development program to be used for license renewal. Tuition-based course requirements will remain an option, but will not be required. This could save teachers as much as \$1400 every five years in tuition costs.
 - Only activities and courses directly related to student achievement will count toward renewal.
 - To target teacher development to the school level, proposed changes would allow a building-level administrator (like a principal) to determine what type of training teachers need most to improve student achievement and renew teachers licenses.
- **Smoother Transitions and Additions.** Current regulations and programs make it difficult for out-of-state teachers to gain licensure in Indiana and also delay the process for highly knowledgeable adults looking to enter the teaching profession.
 - **Out-of-State Candidates:** Eliminate transcript analysis by higher education institutions. New rules will require these applicants to have three years of experience in good standing to receive a proficient practitioner license, an initial practitioner license, or an emergency Permit (if hired by an IN school district).
 - **Changing Professions:** Candidates can receive ABCTE approval and pass content-knowledge tests for licensure, or those with a content-area major can simply take the 15-hour education minor.
- **Flexibility for Better Teacher Placement.** Reduce the five school settings to three settings for licensure. By creating just three categories — Pre-K to 6, 5 to 12 and Pre-K to 12 for areas such as administrators — we will increase the marketability of a teacher's license. This should be a welcome change for school administrators and teachers.
 - Eliminate Outdated Content Areas. Example: bilingual/bicultural education (duplication).
 - Eliminate "reciprocal" license category.

- **Adding Content Areas to License:** Teachers can add a content area to their license by passing the content-area test.
- **Freedom to Hire Administrators who Best Meet the Needs of a District or Building.** Proposed changes would allow school boards to hire superintendents outside the traditional education pipeline. Some of the most innovative and successful school leaders in the country cannot be superintendents or principals under Indiana's current system.
 - Candidates for superintendent would be required to have at least a master's degree and pass the school leaders licensure test.
 - Candidates for building level administrator would be required to hold and a proficient practitioner license and to pass the school leaders exam.
 - Allow a school board and the superintendent of public instruction to waive any administrative license requirements for a specific applicant only for that particular school district. The administrator receiving the waiver will not be issued a license.
- **More Effective License Suspension and Revocation.** Allow IDOE to accept license surrenders for suspensions and revocations, as well as increase the penalties and requirements for renewals.

Effects on current license holders

- The proposed new rules would go into effect July 1, 2010.
- Current teachers will convert their licenses to coincide with these new rules upon renewal. The only exception will be for a LIFE license issued under a prior licensing system.
- The proposed new rules will be grandfathered so that students in schools of education graduating prior to 2012 will not be affected by licensing changes.